

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 24,25,26,33,34,35,36,37, and 45 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 24-29,33-37 and 45 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Balboni U.S. Patent 5,415,280 in view of Kubicek U.S. Patent 3,944,046.

Claims 24-29,33-37 and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Balboni U.S. Patent No. 5,415,280.

Claims 24,25,26,33,34,35,36,37,45 and 47-50, Balboni teaches a tray stocker (10) provided inside an apparatus main body to be reciprocally movable in a vertical direction and configured to store plural component supply trays (2) arranged therein in the vertical direction (Fig. 3); a tray stocker drive device (C3 50-51) for reciprocally moving the tray stocker (10) in the vertical direction to selectively position the tray stocker (10) to a number of predetermined positions including uppermost and lowermost end positions (C3 L48-50); a tray drawing mechanism (1) for horizontally

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drawing to a component delivery position a component supply tray stored in the tray stocker (10) and positioned by the vertical movement of the tray stocker to a predetermined position between the uppermost and lowermost end positions (C3 L62-63); wherein a main body side replenishment tray holding section (111, the successive blades) provided vertically stationarily at a part of the apparatus main body, the part being over or under the tray stocker (10) for externally receiving and holding a replenishment tray (2) which is a component supply tray (1) loaded with components is provided at the uppermost end position on a moving locus of the tray stocker (10) (Fig. 3), and a tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section (403,410) provided at an upper and lower part of the tray stocker (10) for vertical reciprocating movement together with the tray stocker (10), the tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section (410) but Kubicek teaches a tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section being capable of horizontally slidably holding the replenishment tray (2) (C2 L30-31); and while a tray discharge section (3) for holding an empty tray which is a component supply tray emptied of components and for discharging the empty tray out is provided at the lowermost end position of the moving locus (C2 L27-32); and wherein the tray stocker is provided at its upper end part (14) with a tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section (38,52) for receiving and holding the replenishment tray transferred from the main body side replenishment tray holding section and at its lower end part (12) with empty tray holding members for holding the empty tray to be discharged to the tray discharge section (C2 L30-31) (Balboni teaches the vertical movement of the tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section and Kubicek

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teaches the horizontal slidably portion). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill to use a horizontal slidable section in the tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section as taught by Kubicek into the invention of Balboni in order to allow smooth transition between the carriers.

Claim 27, Kubicek teaches the main body side replenishment tray holding section (38,52) comprises a frame member (11) formed to be rectangular and first replenishment tray holding members (38,52) which are protruded from a pair of facing side plates of the frame member to be movable inward in the horizontal direction for holding the replenishment tray (C2 L65-68; C3 L1-3) (Fig. 1). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill to use a horizontal slidable section in the tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section as taught by Kubicek into the invention of Balboni in order to allow smooth transition between the carriers.

Claims 28 and 29, Kubicek teaches the frame member (11) is provided at an upper part of the apparatus main body to be drawable in the horizontal direction (14) so that the replenishment tray is replenished with the frame (11) member drawn out and is bodily provided at the upper part of the apparatus main body (14) and wherein a top plate of the apparatus main body is constructed to be opened and closed so that the replenishment tray is replenished with the top plate opened (C2 L20-25). It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill to use a horizontal slidable section in the tray stocker side replenishment tray holding section as taught by Kubicek into the invention of Balboni in order to allow smooth transition between the carriers.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ms. Kavel P. Singh whose telephone number is (571) 272-2362. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gene Crawford can be reached on (571) 272-6911. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Gene Crawford/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
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KPS